

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9577

INFO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

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REF: YAOUNDE 1840

1. JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT END OF TWO-DAY SUMMIT MEETING IN MAROUS BETWEEN GOWN AND AHIDJO, BESIDES CONTAINING USUAL PLEASANTRIES CONCERNING BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, NOTED TWO LEADERS HAD "REACHED PERFECT UNDERSTANDING" ON ISSUE OF MARITIME FRONTIER. THEY AGREED ON DETAILS OF "EXACT PARTICULARS OF DELINEATION OF MARITIME BORDER AS DEFINED IN MAROUA DECLARATION OF JUNE 1, 1975 AND ITS ANNEX." TWO LEADERS FURTHER REAFFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM AND SECURITY OF NAVIGATION IN CALABAR/CROSS RIVER CHANNEL FOR SHIPS OF TWO NATIONS. COPY OF COMMUNIQUE BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT.

2. COMMENT: EXACTLY WHAT MAROUS DECLARATION AND ANNEX CONTAIN IS UNKNOWN, AND WE WILL SEEK TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER. KANO AGREEMENT OF SEPTEMBER 1, 1974 (LAGOS 8303 AND 8382) ESTABLISHED FOUR KILOMETER WIDE CORRIDOR FREE OF OIL PROSPECTING ACTIVITY WHICH STRADDLES MAJOR PORTION OF OIL CON-

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CESSION ASHLAND OPERATIES UNDER PRODUCTION SHARING CONTRACT WITH

NIGERIAN NATIONAL OIL CORPORATION (NNOC). KANO AGREEMENT DID NOT SAY HOW FAR THE CORRIDOR EXTENDED SEAWARD. IF PROJECTED IN STRAIGHT LINE, IT WOULD EVEN MORE SEVERELY RESTRICT THE NNOC/ASHLAND CONCESSION AND WOULD EVEN APPEAR TO CROSS KNOWN BUT AS YET UNDEVELOPED OILFIELD IN MOBIL CONCESSION WEST RPT/WEST OF NNOC/ASHLAND ON NIGERIAN SIDE. PRESUMABLY MAROUA DECLARATION REMOVES THESE UNCERTAINTIES, BUT HOW IT AFFECTS OIL EXPLORATION IS NOT YET KNOWN.

3. FYI, AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS DELAY, ASHLAND OIL IS MOVING DRILLING RIG (THE PEGASUS) TO THE BORDER AREA THIS WEEK. FUTURE DRILLING PROGRAM INCLUDES SEVERAL SITES NEAR THE CORRIDOR AND IN PATH OF ITS STRAIGHT-LINE EXTENSION. ASHLAND HAS NOT YET LEARNED HOW MAROUA DECLARATION EFFECTS COMPANY OPERATIONS, BUT VISIT BY TOP ASHLAND MANAGEMENT LATER THIS WEEK (FOR CEREMONY INAGURATING ONSHORE OIL PRODUCTION) AFFORDS OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION HIGH NIGERIAN OIL OFFICIALS WHO ATTENDED THE MAROUA SUMMIT. EASUM

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